

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL122			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Scholars Montessori and Childcare Limited			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Quickpenny Road, Lusk, Co. Dublin			
<b>Eircode:</b>	K45 DY75			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Fiona Gregan			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	11/12/2025			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	12	PM	11
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building, Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Hosford			
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector			

### Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

**Conditions if applicable** Not applicable.

### Description of service

Little Scholars Montessori and Childcare Limited is a part time and full day care service located in north Co Dublin. The service is registered to operate from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and is one of three early years services operated by the registered provider. The service is conducted from one care room with ancillary accommodation including sanitary facilities, a kitchen and staff room provided. An outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs seven staff members, five of whom work directly with the children in the service. The administration manager was present in the service on the day of inspection.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8,9,11,15,19,23,25 and 26. However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 10. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

#### Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued to the service on the 11 December 2025 in relation to Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment. On the 12 December 2025 the registered provider responded adequately to the IAN with the measures implemented within the service. Please see details in the body of the inspection report.

#### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, administrator, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part II - Registration and Register

#### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The service was operating within its registration status. The registered provider is aware of the requirement to notify the agency if they propose to change any details of the service.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
  - (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
  - (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-*
- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
  - (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
  - (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

*(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named persons to deputise as required. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities.

(2) The staff files of four staff members employed in the service since the last inspection were reviewed.

Garda vetting disclosures for the registered provider, administrator, a staff member on statutory leave and five staff members were reviewed.

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a) Six validated written references were available from a past employer.

(b) Two validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six staff members employed in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.

(4) Nine staff members who work directly with the early years children had documentary evidence of at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure had not been obtained for one staff member employed in the service. An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued to the service on the 11 December 2025 in relation to Regulation 9- Management and Recruitment.
- (d) Police vetting was not available from one country in respect of one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (3) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures outlined in paragraph (2) had not been completed for three staff members prior to starting in the service and allowed access to the children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (c) In response to the non-compliance the registered provider has stated that Garda Vetting has been obtained for the staff member and that the manager and administrator are aware that employees cannot start in the service until their Garda Vetting has been received.
- (d) In response the police vetting for the staff member has been received and translated into English. All police vetting documents from staff will be obtained before they start in the service.
- (3) All future staff will not be allowed to start in the service before we have received their Garda and police vetting. Owner, Manger and Administration staff member all agreed this action in our weekly meeting on 12th Dec 2025.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)
- (c) Garda vetting for one staff member

(d) Police vetting for one staff member PDF GV document was sent on 23/12 when it was received and is also attached.

(3) Corrective action.

### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted regarding Regulation 9(2)(c),(d) and (3) were reviewed and accepted.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### Non-Compliance Information

(i) The service did not have an outings policy in place which outlined the procedures and practices to be followed by staff when undertaking an outing. For example.

- Describes measures to ensure the safety and welfare of children when on an outing.
- Sets out risk assessment processes and procedures and how the service will respond to identified risks.
- States the approach to obtaining written parental consent for outings.
- Outlines the procedures for supervising and checking children including adult: child ratios.
- States the details for the management of a critical incident on outing (e.g. missing child).
- Specifies first aid measures to be in place for the duration of the outing.
- Details of insurance cover are outlined.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(i) In response to the non-compliance the registered provider has stated that an outings policy is now in place for our service.

The was created by the owner, manager and administration staff member.

We have also obtained written consent from all parents for any future outings the service go on. Staff updated and trained, if needed, on the new policy and required forms. We will review and update our outings policy as

necessary and document all the findings and risk assessments for any future outings in the service. Manager / Person in charge will do checks to ensure risk assessment / checklist are being adhered to by staff and that permissions are in place before any outing proceeds.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

(i) Our outings policy along with copies of the outings checklist and outings risk assessment are attached. A copy of the consent form is also attached within our outings policy. Manager and Owner agreed this action in our weekly meeting 18th Dec 2025. Notes in meeting book.

### **Summary Comment**

Following completion of the corrective and preventive process the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified.

## **Part III – Management and Staff**

### **Regulation 11 - Staffing levels**

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

### **Compliance Information**

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so

throughout the inspection. There were 5 adults working with 12 children in the morning and 3 adults with 11 children in the afternoon.

(8)(a) The registered providers ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters maintained in the service.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The records maintained for the total number of 12 children attending the service were inspected and all were found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3)(c) The children’s records were open to inspection as requested by the inspector as an authorised person

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

##### Basic Needs:

- The staff members were observed to be kind and attentive in their interactions with the children and the atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred.
- Healthy eating was promoted within the service with staff working with parents and children to encourage healthy packed lunches from home. A hot meal was provided to the children at lunch time from an external company. Alternative and additional food was available and offered to the children at lunch time. Drinking water was freely available to the children throughout the day. The staff members sat with the children at mealtimes encouraging conversations and extending interactions.
- The children were observed using the toilet under supervision, with assistance provided by the staff member when necessary.
- Children were observed moving freely within the care room and taking a break from activities and relaxing in a rest area in the care room which was equipped with soft matting, cushions and a child sized sofa.

##### Physical and Material Environment:

- The care room was well resourced with an extensive range and quantity of equipment, toys and materials to support the children's independent thinking and extend their learning and natural curiosity.
- All equipment and materials in the care room were appropriate to the age and development of the children. The furniture provided in the room was low level and age appropriate with toys and play materials accessible.
- An outdoor area was available to the side of the service and was equipped with a sheltered area with covered sand trays, bikes, and cars. A grass area was provided to enable the children to run and play games.

### Supporting Relationships:

- Staff members were familiar with the children’s parents who could engage with staff at drop off and collection.
- Family photographs were on display in the service which supported the children to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness in the service and enabled the children to maintain links and bridge the gap between the service and home.
- Staff were observed working well together in providing care to the children. Transitions were managed in a smooth manner with consideration given to each child and their abilities.
- The children were encouraged to share and take turns and were given choices in their play and activities during the inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

*A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.*

### Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

- The main entrance to the service and care room was closely monitored by staff who granted access by a locked door.
- The premises and outdoor play area was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The care room was observed to be suitable and safe with all cleaning agents and sharp implements out of children’s reach.
- Low level windows and all blind cords in the care room were secured.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.

#### Infection Control:

- Adequate hand-washing facilities were available in the sanitary facilities used by the children, these included thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels and bins.  
Children were supported to clean their hands before lunch and after using the toilet.

- A refrigerator was available in the service to refrigerate perishable food items from home. The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules in operation within the care room and sanitary facility. The care room and sanitary facility had open windows to extract any stale air.

### Safe Sleep:

- Facilities were available if a child required to sleep during the day. No child slept in the service during the inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service.
- The designated fire exit was illuminated and clear of any obstructions throughout the inspection

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. During the inspection the staff and children undertook an outing to another service operated by the registered provider in the village of Lusk. While it is acknowledged that there was evidence on the day of staff carrying out safety measures, the following practices and procedures were not documented by staff prior to the outing taking place.
  - No documented risk assessment completed prior to the children leaving the service.
  - No documented information maintained of the outing to include staff present, children in attendance, first aid box available, charged mobile phone, contact details of parents and adult child ratios.
  - No written parental consent obtained prior to the outing taking place.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. In response the service has stated that they have implemented a new outings policy, we have gotten permission from all parents regarding outings and we have also created an outings risk assessment/ checklist which have all been communicated with to staff and they have been trained on how to complete the necessary forms for any future outings in the service.  
The risk assessment will be completed by the person in charge. It will document any risks involved and how we can manage them.  
The outings checklist will document that we know– all staff present, children in attendance, that's we

have the first aid box and mobile phone brought with all parent contact details. Staff are informed and trained on new policy and required forms.

These have all been communicated with our staff and they are also trained on our policies and procedures in place for any future outings in the service.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **General Safety:**

1. Outings policy, parent consent letter, risk assessment, outings checklist. Owner and Manager send out communications to all staff and had a run through of the new policy/procedures in place for any future outings in the service. Documentary evidence of staff training on service policy.

### **Summary Comment**

Following completion of the corrective and preventive process the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified.

## **Part VI - Safety**

### **Regulation 25 - First aid**

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*

*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*

*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

### **Compliance Information**

(1) The registered provider ensured that a staff member held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training. The service roster demonstrated that a person with FAR training was scheduled to be present and available to the children attending the service at all times when the service was operating.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and easily accessible to the staff and available at all times for the children attending the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
  - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)
- The last recorded fire drill that took place in the service was on the 12 November 2025.
- (4)
- A notice of the fire procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were clearly displayed in the care room.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b)
- A record was not available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)(b) In response the service organised for the fire extinguishers and smoke detectors in the service to be serviced. A reminder will be sent to us when the new maintenance inspection needs to be done every year.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)(b) Documentary evidence submitted.

#### Summary Comment

Following completion of the corrective and preventive process the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified.